

The 1978 UFO Wave in Italy

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In UFO circles worldwide, Italy is usually thought a "poor " country both as UFO events and as UFO research. Reality is quite different, and as an introduction to this report on the 1978 Italian UFO wave, let me clarify briefly the status quo.

In the last 30 years, Italy has been subjected to a relevant number of sightings, although very little is known about them abroad. A regional catalogue of all known sightings in Piedmont (the northwestern part of Italy) has of yet collected more than 650 reports, so that estimates may be tried of the total number of Italian UFO reports around the 20,000 . Usually, the "Unidentifieds" rate is ten percent or less. As well as elsewhere, UFO sightings tend to cluster in waves, the greatest being in 1954 and 1973, while other years (like 1950, 1952, 1962-63, 1974, 1977) showed what may be considered a great activity of the phenomenon.

In a recent study of ours about the major wave of 1954, we collected nearly 500 reports for that year, concentrating in the last few months, particularly in November, in a curious pattern whose peak follows closely the French one in late October. It was a nationwide wave, although stronger in Central and Eastern Italy, with a lot of landings and humanoids. As for 1973, the wave developed again in the last decades of the year, again together with France, just after the well-known radar-visual case of Caselle-Turin Airport, mostly concentrating on northern Italy.

According to a study about Italian close encounters, 300-400 reports are as yet known, and they're still being found. As you see, it's not such a "poor" country. So why is it so considered?. The main reason may probably lie in the language barrier; Italian is not well known and spoken outside national boundaries (except by Italians abroad, of course, which are quite a few), and although nearly everyone in Italy has studied English or French at school, only a few people may speak/read/write other languages correctly.

As for UFO research in Italy, we may distinguish three periods in it; a first one from, say, 1952 to 1964/65; a second one between 1965/66 and 1971/72; the third since 1972/73 to present.

In the early '50s there was little UFO research in Italy; what may be called the first UFO group is the Sky Scouts, born in Turin in 1952, later changing its name into Centro Studi Clipeologici. The first true organisation was however the CIRNOS (Centro Indipendente Raccolta Notizie Osservazioni Spaziali created in 1954

by Ernesto Thayat, an early contributor to Flying Saucer Review. Sadly, CIRNOS disbanded in 1957, following Thayat's sudden death. In the same years when American ufology was crossing the "Dark Age", UFO's and flying saucers (or better flying discs, as we call them, "dischi volanti") became a popular argument, with long series of articles by well known journalists in main magazines and newspapers; we had two news-stands sold UFO mags: "Spazio e vita" (Space and Life) published in Rome 1957-59, and "Dischi volanti" (Flying Saucers) in Turin 1960-61; and there was a real flourishing of groups of enthusiasts all around the country. Most of them were short - lived, and only the CISAER (Centro Italiano Studi Aviazione Elettromagnetica Roma) managed to survive many years since its foundation date in 1957 by Consul Alberto Perego, whose first three books helped to make CISAER a true national centre. CISAER half- disbanded in 1963, when Perego went to Brazil, and the nationwide "leadership" (or better coordinator) was taken by a new magazine published in Turin by Gianni Settimo, head of the aforementioned Centro Studi Clipeologici; "Clypeus" (a Latin word meaning "shield", used by some Latin historians for strange sky phenomena; "clipei ardentis visi in caelo", "fire shields seen in the sky"). At first sold in the news-stands, when it was no longer possible it didn't fold but became a mimeographed bulletin around which Italian researchers grouped in the '60s. In 1965, "Clypeus" sponsored a congress in Turin where the various Italian groups decided to melt together, forming a National Unified Center (Centro Unico Nazionale), which was officially created in 1966. But as usual personal interests and group chauvinisms prevented CUN from becoming the Unified Center it was meant to be. By incorporating the biggest groups (CISAER and Centro Studi Clipeologici) it became the biggest of the groups, but only one of them. None-the-less, the national coagulation around Clypeus and then into the CUN marked a milestone and the 1964-1972 years constitute a period, different from the chaos of the '50s.

In the early '70s, occult and mysteries began becoming the "in" thing, and a lot of popular mags invaded the news-stands, most of them for very short life-spans. A few of them tried to treat the UFO subject seriously, among them "Scienza e ignoto" (Science and the Unknown), more parapsychological than ufological but with contributors like Antonio Ribera, published since 1972 to 1974; "Pi Kappa" (P.K.), edited 1972-73 by famous "ancient astronauts" theorician Peter Kolosimo; and the still surviving "Gli Arcani"

(The Arcans) and "II giornale dei misteri" (The Journal of Mysteries).

In 1972 "Gli Arcani" incorporated "Clypeus", and began having a regular feature by CUN Chairman, Dr. Roberto Pinotti, who had three books published by its publisher. It is still being published, although has only a few pages about UFO's and is more on the parapsychological side. "II giornale dei misteri" (the oldest of the group, published since 1971) obtained to host work by the Sezione Ufologica Fiorentina, a panel of researchers devoted since the late '60s to collect all known Italian UFO sightings for a book series ("UFO in Italia") of which the first volume (1900-1953) has already been published, and the second one (1954) is to be published within the end of 1979. In 1972 it launched the idea of forming groups of enthusiasts (called "gruppi di ricerca", research groups) all around the country, a good idea which however brought soon the "Giornale dei misteri" to the impossible coordination of more than 500 "acronyms", each one formed of two or three youngsters, usually under - 18, without a real coordination and often without a UFO education/background.

The disappearance of "Clypeus" (the symbol of the '60s ufology, which has however begun again publication in 1976), the appearance of popular magazines and the flourishing of youngster groups marked the turn between the second and the third period. In consideration of these facts, and also of another one (in 1973 a group of researchers divorced from CUN refusing the divulgative approach it was assuming in "Gli Arcani" and formed a research panel, CNIFAA, Comitato Nazionale Indipendente per lo Studio dei Fenomeni Aerei Anomali), our centre changed its name from National Unified Center into the more realistic National Ufological Center (Centro Ufologico Nazionale) and began a slow restructuring task which brought together the most active groups, building up a real national organization with regional and provincial branches, beginning a patient dialogue with mass-media and with certain "official" environments in political and military areas, and finally bringing its news-letter, "Notiziario UFO" in the news-stands, in late 1978.

Last year, 1978, marked probably the beginning of a new period in Italian Ufology, for many reasons we'll see in detail. Indeed, let's pass on to the bulk of this paper, now, the 1978 Italian UFO Wave.

Looking back at the UFO activity in that year as a whole, it is impressing to note that more than 500 reports are presently

known to us, at least 130 of them classifiable as "close encounters", 25 of these involving humanoid entities, 20 physical traces, 30 temporary effects, plus at least 50 photographic cases and more than 40 reports from police officers, control tower personnel, military men and so on. It still looks unbelievable to us the great number of events (many of them exceptional or unprecedented) which make 1978 a real milestone. For obvious reasons, I won't be able to report all but the most interesting events in detail, and will briefly present only some of them in this paper, hoping to manage to give you a general idea of what happened.

The most interesting sightings in the first half of the year took place in Friuli, the north-western tip of Italy, in March. On March 11, three radio amateurs in Ciseriis (province of Udine) went onto nearby Mt. Bernardia to Ham. There, they saw an orange ball maneuvering, passing right above their car and landing in a nearby wood. While approaching the place, the witnesses were frightened by the stronger and stronger brightness and fled. On March 20, one of the three men felt some kind of impulse (a "telepathic order", he says) to go back on the place, where he arrived at 00.30. There, he met a two meters tall man, covered with a one-piece suit and a helmet, which put forward his right hand. The witness, feeling extraordinarily calm and quiet, took the being's hand with his own right hand, but felt a pain and tried to retrieve it, which he couldn't do as the being's hand was "sticky". Scared, he had to use his other hand to make the right one free. The being walked then back to a previously unnoticed object, whence a conical beam came which took him inside. The hand of the witness remained burned for several weeks. No traces were found on the spot, perhaps due to strong rain-storms in the following days. On March 29, near Faedis (Udine), a light was sighted landing by a few radio-hams, whose radio went dead. Ten witnesses approached the landing place, but were frightened by the bright lights. On the following day they came back on the place and found a 8 mts. large circle in which grass and soil were burned. No grass grew again in it in spring or in summer. Similar circles or ovoids were found in some other places in the same province where strange lights were seen. In one of these, 17 meters dia., at Mortigliano, plants changed their color in the following months, growing taller and greener.

Apart from sightings, the most important event of national scope was the release (in March) of Spielberg's movie, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" (in Italian, "Incontri ravvicinati del terzo tipo").

which developed an unexpected and live debate in news-papers., radio and TV, involving the best known names of Italian literature and journalism (Giovanni Arpino, Alberto Moravia, Primo Levi) about UFO's and Extra-terrestrial Life, something unprecedented.

In such an excited environment, the coming of Prof. Hynek in Italy for a convention sponsored to Florence by "Il giornale dei misteri" in late May was given a lot of space in TV and news-papers, and which is even more important - "convinced" one of our leading astrophysicists, prof. Giuseppe Tagliaferri, of the UFO reality as a unexplained phenomenon.

Only a few days after Hynek's departure, a real bombshell exploded in news-papers about a UFO report from the Ministry of Defence. It was a report about the sighting of a strange green light seen on March 9th by several airliner pilots all over eastern Italy. The report was sent by the Ministry to three UFO organizations; CUN, CNIFAA and CIRSUFO. From the CUN viewpoint, it wasn't anything exceptional; only one of the several reports by military personnel we were being sent by the Ministry since a few months; we had asked for unclassified UFO sighting reports by pilots and we received soon a file detailing six unclassified cases involving Italian military personnel in 1977. So began a collaboration that both we and the Ministry kept unpublicized, as it was for study purposes. The reports we were sent were written on UFO questionnaires by the Ministry, heading "Relazione su avvistamento di oggetto volante non identificato" (Unidentified Flying Object Sighting Report), mainly a translation of well-known USAF questionnaire.

In early May, when sending us this last report, the issuing official sent copy of it not only to us but also to CNIFAA and CIRSUFO, who had recently asked the Ministry for UFO material. CNIFAA agreed not to publicize the fact. The group called CIRSUFO (Gentro Internazionale Ricerche e Studi sugli UFO, i.e. International Center for UFO Research and Study), which despite its name is one of the hundreds of youngsters' groups I, mentioned before, found in its hands something to big for them and gave report copies to some journalists who of course made headlines out of it. Following such irresponsible behaviour of "the ufologists," the Ministry didn't send out any more material from their files, our explanations notwithstanding. The Mantero brothers (heads and only members of the aforementioned group) have so managed to compromise a rather well started cooperation, which we are now trying to engage again with the M.O.D.

Because of the considerable amount of press coverage given to the UFO subject because of these events (CE III K, HYNEK MOD), we were expecting some UFO wave in summer (usually a good season) but it failed to take place, although the summer months were, as usual, somewhat richer in reports. A preliminary report on the 1978 year, show the following figures; 13 reports in January, 5 in February, 10 in March, 7 in April, then 15 in May, 14 in June, 15 in July, and 20 in August.

Two events in July are worth to be reported here. In Veneto, a north-eastern region, a sudden flow of reports via letters to news-papers looked at first like a local flap, which later revealed to be an "experimental psychosis", psychiatrist Prof. Franco Cagnetta and his assistants sent hoax letters, attached wall- advices asking for information (signing as "UFO Sighting Center of the Agraburg University of Oklahoma"), built a "sighting tower" in Jesolo, whence they sent up lighted balloons by night, hoping to start a "UFO psychosis", which didn't arrive!

The second event took place on July 4th on Mt. Etna slopes, near Sicilian town of Catania. I want to report it here because of its unusual characteristics; it was a CE III with two different kind of entities, witnesses' behavior may only be described as "irrational", witnesses were military personnel; sightings were reported from the area at the same hour by independent witnesses; there was an investigation by Intelligence personnel. At 22.30 on that evening, a woman and three officers attached to Catanis-Sigonella Air-Navy Base "felt" they had to go onto Mt. Etna, and they went and saw three red, pulsating round objects, one of which suddenly went down landing behind Mt. Sona. The four witnesses drove there and walked towards the landed object, at about 300 meters; it was a domed disc, about 12 meters in diameter, with several red and yellow lights all around it. Nearby, five or six beings were standing. Two of the beings approached the witnesses making gestures to them; they were white-dressed, tall and yellow- haired like typical contactee entities. The others (three or four) were shorter and covered with helmets and "space-suits" (scaphanders). After a few minutes, at about 23 hr., the witnesses felt "satisfied" of what they had seen and drove back home. As you see, there are some typical contactistic patterns (thelepathic impulse, blond men, satisfaction, etc.); moreover, the witnesses have heard some lectures by infamous Sicilian contactee Eugenio Siragusa. This wouldn't give them a good credibility index. But they are responsible people and both the Intelligence investigation and ours (by an

Air Force Captain) found no discrepancies in their accounts. Moreover, they didn't know it, but several UFO sightings were reported that evening between 9pm. and 10.30 pm. from Catania and Ragusa provinces.

As of August, it all looked like a rather quiet and poor year. We were not expecting much from the last months of the year. But in September things began to change; in the early part of the month a flap struck the piedmontese province of Alessandria. We know of more than 20 sightings, some of them being CE II's. The major case (the one which "opened" the (flap) has been recently reported in FSR, so I'll only mention it here briefly, even if I've been involved personally in this investigation. A 14 year old boy of Alessandria hamlet of S. Michele was looking out of the window at 8am. when he heard a strange hissing sound and saw a cigar-shaped object, metallic in appearance, rising from the field in front of the house and taking off at unbelievable speed. On the place, traces were found on the plants, which were bent but not broken, in an ovoidal 6.5 meters long and 2.9 meters large area, all plants being bent at the same height, with a perfect right angle, and all dried (not burned). On the following evening a few women talking at 10 pm, saw a white stripe coming down from the sky into the aforementioned field, there becoming a red ball rotating on itself, then disappearing. A few seconds later the phenomenon was repeated in an identical fashion. And again a third time, but this time the red ball was greater and approaching the women who fled in terror. The flow of reports from the area (among them a photo taken by a journalist) brought hundreds of people on the place to see "where the UFO has landed", which literally destroyed the field in a few days. Another red ball was seen taking off from a field in Frugarolo, a few kilometers away, and witnesses run in the field found a perfect circle 4.5 meters large where the grass had disappeared, the stones were hot, and there were three black areas of a strange oily powder. On the night of September 13th, tens of people in Spinetta Marengo saw a large meteor falling near the Michelin fabric, where a fire developed, which burned grass but not soil or garbage, while a tube of solid light rose from the ground and a red object took off from it, moving for some time in the sky together with other "dancing stars".

So have we arrived to September 14th, when suddenly, between 5.45 and 6am. thousands of people all over Italy saw a strange object moving in the sky along a path running approximately from southwest to north-east.

All descriptions agreed as for the general shape; fish-tail, triangle brighter in the forehead, disc with diverging trails, triangle-tailed cylinder, arrow, etc., all referring to some central body or light with two diverging light-beams behind. As sightings came all at the same hour from places scattered in an area 1000 kilometers long and 600 kms large (similar sightings were reported in France and Yugoslavia, too), it was reasonable to assume that it was one very bright object flying in a straight line very high above Europe; for us, all this fit with a bolide or great meteor. On the following day, just every Italian news-paper was devoting front-page headlines to the sightings, usually with interviews of scientists and nearly all reporting an explanation put forward by Naples physicist Bruno Caccin (some-time reported as a Ministry of Defence explanation), the American satellite Pegasus I, which was to re-entry Earth's atmosphere soon. This was a rather silly explanation, as Pegasus was still orbiting (actually fell down on September 16th) in a tropical path (so it would have been visible from Italy as a star-like light moving in the southern sky from east to west). Clearly, it was put forward to avoid panic. On September 16th, daily news-papers were again reporting UFO sightings, and offering a new explanation, suggesting that sightings would have surely gone on (and they stopped) in the following days due to the Cammeo missile launch producing a bright lithium cloud visible in northern Europe and perhaps even in northern Italy. Again a silly explanation (as well as Pegasus re-entry Cammeo launch took place several days later) very well publicized to avoid panic. On Sunday, September 17th, only a few dailies took again the argument over, mostly underlining the "repeater" sightings above Rome ("Third night with the UFO", "Now just too many UFO's, and so on). Actually, a few tens of sightings were reported in the week following September 14th, most of them plain examples of stars/planets, meteors, planes and even a motor-way sodium lamp (described as a landing saucer!) following the typical psychosis pattern; first sightings - news-paper large coverage - public interest suddenly awoken - a lot of misinterpretations - the press report them to "follow" public interest - flap conditions makes press and authorities **worried** - worst cases are explained - cover up on new sightings.

Of course not all the sightings of what is by now known as the "Pegasus flap", say September 13 - 20, were due to conventional causes; a few of the sightings were really unexplainable, and one may wonder whether more UFO's than usual were actually in our skies or simply more reports were

reported due to good press coverage. Among these "unidentifieds" is one of the most interesting landings of the year, which I want to detail here.

On September 17th, at 8.15 pm, a woman coming back home from work in Torrita di Siena and her teenaged son saw a white stripe of light coming down from the sky becoming a red ball of fire (please note that it was the same as in San Michele d' Alessandria, exactly two weeks later) which lit up all the area and suddenly disappeared, while lights in nearby houses went out. Less than half an hour later, barber Rivo Faralli left his mother's house a few tens meters from the place of the first sighting, got in his car, started the engine, switched on the headlight and drove a few meters, then the engine stopped by itself, and the car stopped too, while lights went out, and a bright object landed on the road in front of his car, actually hovering half a meter from the ground; the shape was a domed orange-red hat, about three meters long. Under the thing, three light beams were hitting the road. A door in the object opened, and two humanoid beings came out, and approached the witness' car not by walking but "floating", never touching the ground with their feet. They were about 1.20 meters tall, dressed with a green overall and a helmet with two aerials. They walked (floated) all round the car, apparently more interested in it than in the frightened witness, then entered again the object which took off with a light and sound explosion. Traces were found on the road; three burned, black circles, 50 centimeters large, 4 meters apart. By the way, TV broadcasts disappeared from screen for about a minute at 9.30 pm, in Torrita houses. Analysis of soil samples in and out the traces have shown no difference in radioactivity, fluorescence, X-rays and carbon tests. No chemical comparison could be made as the soil was not omogenous at all, so that differences would have been meaningless. It is sure that no chemical substances were used to lit a fire (hoax) and that soil temperature never was higher than 500°C. A lot of details about the entities' appearance and behavior have had to be omitted here for lack of time. Investigation on the case was conducted by our Chairman Dr. Roberto Pinotti together with local Carabinieri, whose opinion on the witness is very good. By the way, this Army body (under Ministry of Defence orders) has been instructed to investigate and report good UFO events by a telex-phonogram in August 1977, and in several instances they have followed UFO cases, sometime co-operating with us. They have however no special knowledge, training or even interest in UFO subject and their investigations are not very accurate.

October was a rather quiet month, with only about 20 sightings (September gave us more than 100 reports), and the only sighting I want to report is that by Naples University Meteorological Observatory, Dr. Antonino Palumbo.

On Sunday, October 22nd, at 4.30pm, Prof. Palumbo and his assistant Ciro Fasano were repairing an anemometer when they saw what they at first dismissed as an air-liner; a bullet-shaped, white object, coming from east to west. Because of its strange behaviour, they soon realized it was not a plane; it was rotating on its axis, suddenly and rapidly changing its altitude and direction, following a general westward path. Suddenly, it went back on the same path, without decelerating, descended a little, then ascended again and stopped for a few seconds, finally taking off vertically for four minutes, till it was too little to be seen. The two meteorologists were not able to recognize the object as any conventional craft. Airport radar didn't "see" it, but several independent witnesses did all from the city. Prof. Palumbo was so impressed by his sighting that he has accepted to be consultant for meteorology to our center, and has already taken part in a conference of ours in Naples. The case was given a lot of space in news-papers, together with the Valentich plane disappearance in Australia, as Valentich's father was born in Trieste and his family is well known there.

In the second half of October, things began happening in what is now known as "the Adriatic triangle", what I prefer to call the "Adriatic mess". It's very difficult to give an idea of what took place there, and I think that some implications are unprecedented even on worldwide scale. The first reports of something odd began reaching harbor-police in Pescara about the 20th, at first only a few, later more and more. By early November a long section of the Adriatic coastline was in true panic about unexplained phenomena, and fishers were asking for naval escorts.

What kind of phenomena? Basically, four kind of things:

- a) daylight sightings of waterspouts and foaming water columns suddenly emerging from absolutely still sea: these were observed by several fish-boats and were about 30 meters tall;
- b) Light phenomena; red or white balls of fire appearing and disappearing near fish-boats by night, often chasing and following them; scared fishermen even dived into the sea;
- c) Dark objects sailing in or under the sea,

with trails and waves; objects emerging from the sea and/or diving into it, In one case, a boat caught something in its nets and was pulled backwards, turned on itself a right angle, while waves were boiling;

d) EM effects and disturbances on the radar equipments used by fish-boats to detect fishes. The best case took place on November 9th; harbor police-ship CP 2018 was patrolling off Silvi Marina when they saw a red "rocket" coming out from the sea and disappearing in the night sky. Thinking of a SOS flash they approached the area and looked for some ship in trouble for two hours, then came back to the place they were when they saw the light and it began again approaching, when suddenly their radar screen went black and VHF radio communications were disturbed. On the same evening, radio-hams onshore had to stop their communications for strong, never before heard, interferences (QRM), and a local TV station couldn't even be detected because of external, unexplained interferences. In several instances, radar screens showed partial blank areas, and in one case it was a localized trouble, moving across the screen (this meant the source of the interference was moving, too).

Scores of cases are presently known, usually with several independent witnesses, and several explanations have been put forward. For water columns; depth charge bombs either by illegal fishers or by secretly operating NATO submarines (of course bombs are quite noisy, while these columns were silent); or methane (swamp gas) eruption from the sea floor (but an expert remarked that if this were the case we'd have had so much gas to satisfy Italian market for the next 20 years); another explanation was sea-quakes (not remarked by seismic observatories). For light phenomena sailing in the sea, again swamp gas burning in the air; for taking-off lights it was suggested missiles launchings from little submarines (in the area sea floor is ten to twenty meters deep). Submarines again were suggested for the dark emerging and sailing objects. As for their origin, there were usually two hypotheses: NATO secret operations in the Adriatic sea, of Japanese fishers trying to frighten Italian fishers away (ludicrous!). As for EM interferences, explanation ranged from occasional troubles to Air Force radar interferences, or even disturbing stations on the Yugoslavian coast (even more ludicrous!).

Too many explanations, too different from each other, often absurd when confronted with the facts (Japanese fishers, Yugoslavian attacks, swamp gas). It's sure that there were US Navy ships around for NATO operations of "Reforger- Autumn Forge",

between September 18th and December 22nd, in Mediterranean Sea. But the EM interferences, the water columns and the light spheres following fish-boats wouldn't be easily explainable by this hypothesis. The only certain thing is that there was something absolutely extraordinary, as fishers refused to sail for several weeks in November. If you think that these people live on fishing, and that fish caught was reduced by 30%, you may understand the strong social and economical effects the phenomenon has had, perhaps for the first time in history, on the life of two regions (Marche, with Pesaro, Ancona, Ascoli and Macerata provinces; and Abruzzo, with Pescara and Teramo provinces).

The Adriatic mess had a peak in November although sightings began in late October and went on during December. Authorities took the fishers' reports seriously and two Navy ships were sent around to see what was going on and to get fishers calm. Think that in the region UFO's were the main talking argument for months everywhere, none denying the reality of these phenomena, everyone criticising Italian government for having never studied UFO's seriously!. Of course this brought to psychosis situation, and tens of sightings were reported from inland, most due to natural causes, especially Venus, more and more prominent in eastern skies early in the morning. In Chieti, thousands of people spent one week-nights looking at Venus and Jupiter, and photographing and filming them; not only laymen, but journalists, TV cameramen, policemen too. Among the sightings were also some close encounters of the second and third kind.

Among the most interesting reports, I want to detail one which took place in Rome-Fiumicino Airport. On November 12th at 7.30 pm, Air force personnel attached to the airport and control tower operators saw three bright orange balls approaching from the sea, one of them coming down and crossing slowly the descend path of airliners, risking a collision. But before it was possible to get on alert, it was gone eastwards. This was the second airport sighting in the year, the first taking place on May 2nd, at about 8pm, at Milan-Linate Airport, when a white light was seen by control tower operator and hundreds of people in Milan and around. And remember the well-known Turin- Caselle Airport radar-visual sighting in 1973 and the Cagliari-Elmas Airport sighting by Army helicopters in 1977, both reported in FSR. In both 1978 Airport sightings, nothing was detected by radar, at Milan because the object was too distant (we figured it was perhaps beyond French border), at Fiumicino because it was too low.

In the end of November, one of the best pieces of news was reported all around the country; Italian best-known contactee, Eugenio Siragusa, founder of a ("Cosmic Brotherhood Study Center"), was imprisoned after 16 years of "activity", charged with rape, and for so many things you can't even think of. This was surely one of the happiest events in the year, for Siragusa and his "center" (which collects just all Italian cultists and fanatics of the "space brethren") often managed to damage UFO and ufology image in public, scientific and journalist minds. By the way, his followers explained the Adriatic flap with the old, infamous story of an extra-terrestrial underwater UFO base under Pescara, which was damaged by offshore petroleum research, so that UFO's had to come out and repair it; And the December flap in Southern Italy wasn't; but a manifestation of the "space brothers" for Siragusa's imprisonment! You see, the folkloristic side (or fringe) is not missing in Italy.

Now we come to the last month of the year. We were by then expecting the last fringes of the flap, and a quiet month in which collect and evaluate data of such great UFO activity. But all past events were just nothing when confronted with what had still to take place. Actually, about half of the more than 500 known sightings took place in December. And the most interesting events happened in this month. November was but a pale shadow with its 60 reports, when confronted with more than 200 (300, if we consider the last appendages of the flap, which began about December 10th and went on till January 3rd, 1979).

The first event of the month was one of the (if not the) most interesting and disturbing event; something extraordinary for our country; an abduction case. I can remember only one abduction case in Italy, in 1954. I find this case especially interesting as I personally involved in it. I was the first UFO researcher to speak with and interview the witness, less than 48 hours after his experience. On Wednesday, December 6th, 26 year old Fortunato Zanfretta, nightwatcher living in Genova, was patrolling in the area of Torriglia, in the late evening. At 11.45pm, near an uninhabited house in Marzano hamlet, he saw four white torchlights moving around in the court. Thinking of thieves, he approached, when his car's engine stopped. He tried to call the main station but the radio wasn't working any longer, while headlights and dashboard lights went out, too. He decides to go first to see the house, then to repair what he thinks is an electric system failure, and takes torchlight and pistol. As he's approaching,

the four lights disappear behind the house corner. Bravely, the nightwatcher switches off the torch, goes to the opposite corner and waits for the thieves. Suddenly, he feels a strong push and falls on the ground. In a few seconds he turns himself, hitting something with his forehead, grabs the torch, lights it up and points it at a man's height to cope with whoever is there; he only sees a mass of horizontal dark grey tubes, so he points the light higher and higher, and lastly sees the "face" of the "thief", who's about 3 meters tall. When we spoke with him, he couldn't describe this face; he couldn't remember it as it was "too ugly". He told me that he could see it when he was trying to sleep (what he couldn't do), and he was then awaking soon in terror without remembering it any longer. This meant a strong emotional shock, erasing the conscious memory away, but so strong that it was trying to emerge from sub-conscious as soon as possible, for example in dreams. Only a few days later he was able to remember the face and sketch it; a dark green head with two awful, large; yellow, triangular eyes, and a third one or something similar on the forehead; no hair but several pointed aculeus.

Back to his account; when he is looking at it, the being suddenly disappears in thin air. "Perhaps I fainted, I don't remember well". Surprised and scared, Zanfretta runs back to the car, when he hears a loud, unbearable hiss, and feels a terrible heat-wave. Looking back, he sees a great, white-yellow triangle, "like a big, bright Chinese hat", partially hidden behind the house, and as large as the house (40 meters), it spreads up like an arrow towards the sea and disappears, leaving him half-blind. He runs to the car, which has now engine and lights on, and calls for help, shouting; "Mama, how big he is, how big; how ugly is he, mama, how ugly". His colleagues think he is in trouble and ask him if he is being attacked, and hear the strange answer, "They're not men, they are no men". It is 00.16am, on December 7th, later on we'll ask ourselves, how could he spend half an hour to walk a hundred meters, wait one or two minutes, see the being, and run back? Zanfretta wasn't able to explain; "perhaps I fainted", he repeated. But there are several other confused details; after calling for help he remember being again near the house, standing, but cannot remember having walked back there and why, as he was scared to death. But moreover, his colleagues find him at 1.06, fifty minutes later, lying in the meadow, 80 meters from the house, very hot (and the night is cold). He can't explain what he did in these 50 minutes either. Then, when he

sees the approaching car's headlights, he thinks it's the "Chinese hat" coming back a few minutes later, and takes his pistol and tries to hit his colleagues, who have to reassure him before approaching. In the place where he's found lying, his colleagues found a darkened area, horseshoe-shaped, almost 3 centimeters deep, 15 centimeters large, whose diameter was 2.5 meters to 8 meters; the grass in it is flattened. During an investigation by Carabinieri on the following morning, another track is found behind the house, where the object was seen taking off; it's smaller, 2 meters in diameter, and virtually invisible in daylight, while very evident when lit by night. A few independent witnesses are found in nearby towns who say they have seen a yellow triangle-shaped light approaching Torriglia at 9pm that evening.

Because of the two "holes" in his memory the first of about 20 minutes between 23.50 and 00.10, the second of 50 minutes between 00.18 and 01.18, we convinced the witness to be put in regressive hypnosis. On December 23rd, Dr. Mario Moretti put him in hypnosis and took him back to December 6th. Zanfretta repeated the above account, then explained what happened in the first quarter of an hour (18 minutes), something he didn't remember consciously. He was approached not by one but by several "monstrous beings" which wanted him to follow them "elsewhere". He tried to resist but his mind was obeying the beings, which somehow prevented him from moving and transmitted him certain messages (among them a promise to come back). He said he was taken in a very hot, round room where he was put something on his forehead, which was paining him. As the aliens often left him alone, he managed to flee and call for help. Because of his anxiety in living again these facts, Dr. Moretti didn't let him relate the second part of his experience, after calling for help. It was agreed that a second hypnosis was to be held on the following Saturday, December 30th.

But in the late evening of Wednesday December 27th, while Zanfretta was patrolling as usual, at 22.46, a few miles before reaching Torriglia, something took place again. His colleagues heard everything by the radio. Suddenly, he feels the strong headache he had been feeling for four days after his experience, and he can see nothing because of "mist". He tries to stop the car, but the brake doesn't work, and the car keeps on going and turns by itself along a road, while he can't do anything but tell his colleagues what's taking place. In the darkness, the car goes up along the road, very fast, too fast. Destroyed by the headache, he only wants to sleep. Suddenly, the car stops suddenly by itself, and he

knocks his head against the windscreen; he's in the middle of a steep road, near a strange, oval, bright object. The car door opens and he feels the impulse to obey an order to get out. He manages to alert the central, whose operator listens to his second message at 22.50, four minutes after his first words; "I've arrived! There's a bright light here out. I have to go". At once, his colleagues start to search for him, but they don't know where he is, and manage to find him only at 23.09, on December 28th, when he calls again for help. Again, when he sees his colleagues' car headlights he tries to defend himself, fleeing under the falling rain. When they reach him and catch him, he can remember only a bright yellow screen informing him that "next time we'll take you away once and forever", and he feels he has "something to say". His body and clothing are very hot, as well as the car roof. His face is red and burned, as if from sun. On the place, several large footprints are found, 50 centimeters long. Five bullets have disappeared from his pistol, which however has not been used, and six other cartridges are missing. He's subjected to medical tests and found under "nervous hypertension due to emotional shock", is forbidden to take his pistol with him and put on daylight patrols. What's amazing is that, dry weather and in daylight, you spend at least twelve minutes to reach the spot from the place he lost control of the car, while he managed to spend only four minutes by night and while raining.

On January 7th, Dr. Moretti put Zanfretta again under hypnosis and he recalled being taken inside a metallic, triangle-shaped, yellow craft by a green beam which took him into a large room where there were at least ten beings, which he described in detail; tall, green in color, with yellow triangular eyes, aculeus around the face, hands and legs like men, huge feet, fingers ending with round nails. They have a "net" instead of the mouth, from which light is coming through which they speak with him. It's really impressing to hear the hypnosis record, while Zanfretta cries and asks "them" not to touch him and to put away the "thing on the head" which pains him, protesting for the heat, answering their questions and questioning them. It's interesting to hear him remarking; "Why are you taking my bullets?... No, not the pistol.. It's mine... Why do you take it?... You've shot in that picture but I've heard nothing!".

There would be much, much more to say about this case, about the witness, the traces, the hypnosis sessions, the follow-ups, but we can not do it now. I hope that FSR will soon be able to publish a

complete report. Suffice it to say that on February 6th, 1979, he was put under narcoanalysis (pentotal) tests by the International Center of Medical and Psychological Hypnosis in Milan, under direct control of Chairman Prof. Marco Marchesan, confirming everything he told in previous conscious and hypnotic accounts.

By now, let us go back to December, and let's look at that month's events. As I told before, we know of more than 200 reports for the last month in 1978, most from Southern Italy. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Italians were confronted with strange lights in the sky. What's most impressive is that in scores of sightings Police, Carabinieri and Army men were among the witnesses. Often, police radios were disturbed when UFO's were around. Tens of photographs were taken, a lot of them by Scientific Teams of Police and Carabinieri. I will mention here only some interesting case, also because at least 60% of the sightings were doubtlessly due to Venus, Brighter and brighter in morning skies, and quite a few were due to Jupiter, meteors, planes, balloons and other conventional causes, in a true UFO psychosis. In several instances, Venus was described as a near landing saucer with pulsating lights. For some sightings we're still in doubt, as descriptions and behavior would fit Venus, but EM effects were reported. Sometime we doubt if these were real or not.

In early December, probably on December 10th, two UFO's were caught by Potenza Picena Air Force Base radar, and two F-104 jets were sent up to look at them. Then followed a long chase which brought the F-104 as far as Venice, without reaching the objects. We know of other rumors of radar sightings and jet pursuits, but military secret covers them well.

Let's see some of the reports in which Police and Carabinieri were involved; these cases are about 10%.

On Friday, December 8th, at 4.30am, a few nightwatchers near Barletta (province of Bari, Puglia) saw a bright object moving north to south. They stopped four lads in motorcar, and sent them to call for Carabinieri. The youngsters went, then came back and saw a triangle-shaped object hovering in the sky; it was like an inverted cone, rotating on itself and emitting a blinding white light. It began moving towards Trani, and the witnesses followed it. This description fits well with the typical Venus sighting, but now something odd took place, suddenly the light stopped, and another one arrived in front of the

car, along the road, blinding the driver so that he got out of the road and had to be hospitalized for nervous breakdown. Carabinieri arrived in time to see the object and call their station, where the commander was watching it with binoculars.

A similar case (it may be Venus, but).. took place on the following day, December 9th, at 6am, near Reggio Calabria. A Police patrol-car watched a bright object with intermittent lights of various colors. Policemen lit up their car's lightbeam and pointed it towards the object, which seemed to enlarge, pointing a lightbeam earthwards and switched five lights on, switching them off when the police switched off their beam. Excited, witnesses called their central by radio but after 30 seconds the radio blacked out, while other patrol-cars in the area were watching the object.

On Monday, December 11th, at 2.30am, a bright circular light with an earth-bound beam was spotted by Police near Grottaminarda (province of Avellino); policemen thought at first that it was a plane; then saw it again, larger, and watched it with binoculars, hurting their eyes with its bright light. The object became larger and larger and, thinking it was to land, policemen called the central. At 4.55 the first alert group arrived and snapped several photos while the object was slowly moving eastwards. At 6.20, dawn sunshine made the object no longer visible.

Isn't it like Venus?. Still more wondering is the following; on that same morning, at 3.15, a Carabinieri patrol near Palermo was hit by a white-red beam, looked upwards and saw a fire ball and called the center. At 4am. four photos were taken. Other sightings by Carabinieri in nearby towns were reported till 7.40am.

On the following morning, December 12th, since 3am. several sightings were reported from all around Palermo, and several photos were taken. At the same hour, a Carabinieri patrol-car in Tremestieri, near Messina, saw a gold-yellow circular object as big as the full moon, very bright, flying slowly southwards and mirroring in the sea. It stopped above the Strait, then smaller spheres came out of it and went south, later coming back into the "mother-ship". Radios remained useless until the object disappeared in dawn-light.

In the early hours of December 13th, police and Carabinieri sightings took place in Cagliari, Lecce and Palermo (again photographed, by Police).

And now some close encounters at random; on December 12th, at 10.15pm. a motorist was driving between Marina di Montemarcano

and Marzocca (Ancona province) when his engine and lights went out, as well as his tape-recorder, and the car stopped. He had to push it onto the right side of the road, when he saw a strange beam focused on the car from a light which soon went away towards the sea, while tape-recorder and lights faded on again.

On the following evening, December 13th at 6.30pm, two motorway watchers near Avellino sighted a luminous mass, like "a bright wheel" coming down to a few tens of meters from the ground, hovering there a little, then taking off again fastly, going towards Puglia, where a few hours later two soldiers on watch at Brindisi Air Force Base saw an object with pulsating lights manoeuvring in the sky and hovering near them. Then a strange being took off from the ground skywards.

On December 15th, at 00.15, two photographers near Aquila watched and snapped a triangle-shaped object with a hole in it (roughly doughnut shaped) hovering over the town.

And I would be able to go on for hours, with hundreds of reports, scores of them involving photos, landings etc. I will stop here and report only three more sightings from the end of the month. The first is the well-known incident at the electrical central in Abruzzo.

At 6.50, on December 24th, Benito Franchi had been working for 20 minutes in Pietracamela (province of Aquila) electrical central. Suddenly, he felt bad and fainting, while instruments of the working generator began oscillating as for overcharge on the network (impossible at such early hour). Moreover, also instruments of the other generator, not working and not attached to power-lines, began oscillating. This went on for about 60 seconds, leaving instruments badly damaged. Franchi could not even alert his colleague, sleeping in a near room, felt paralyzed and fell onto the ground, unable to move even a finger. After a few seconds it all ended, and he was still arguing about it when he noticed a great brightness out of the window; three or four flashes, coming from a nearby wood. Getting out, he saw a large, bright ball of fire, very red, whose light hurt his eyes. The thing took off and disappeared in the sky, while another one, color-changing, appeared over Mt. Gran Sasso. He awoke his colleague and both watched its maneuvers above the mountain. After a few minutes it hovered motionless above the mount, and the witnesses called a hotel owner of Prati di Tivo, near the

mountain slopes, who awoke his guests and looked at the light, Benito Franchi was found to suffer from a strong conjunctivite, "due to probable exposition to a too bright light source". No explanation was found for the effects on the central control instruments.

The second case involves again Carabinieri and Police together. It took place on December 29th, near Masone (prov. Reggio Emilia), hundreds of witnesses saw at about 5am. a triangle-shaped red and white object. It was a Carabinieri patrol-car to first notice the light, alerting Police and walkers (they even stopped a bus). Several photos were taken. In all, 13 policemen and Carabinieri watched it till 7am.

The last case, one of the last of the year, took place in the early hours of December 30th, at Pesaro Army Base, where a bright domed light landed in the middle of the Base court, seen by sentries and awoken soldiers who didn't dare to fire at it. When it took off again, a circle of dried grass was found where it had hovered two meters above the ground.

I have already mentioned that the flap actually ended in early January, reaching a last peak in the early hours of January 1st, when hundreds of people were coming back home from New Year's Eve Parties. Between 03.00 and 07.00am., a bright light was visible in eastern skies, slowly moving. Of course it was our old friend, Venus (I really feel like an U.S.A.F. spokesman, but that's the truth!) brighter than usual because of atmospheric conditions (strong wind and some kind of natural lens in upper atmosphere). In the following days the declining flap seemed to take new vigor (more than 50 sightings in three days), with Carabinieri and Police always on scene. On January 3rd, between 3am, and 8am, hundreds of Milan people watched two "flying saucers" hovering over the city. They were filmed by TV cameras and photographed by Scientific Police; again the doughnut-shaped light, this time clearly explainable with the use of telelens causing Venus to arc on itself.

All in all, you may imagine the mess in news-papers (we've collected more than 2000 newsclippings in the last four months of the year), radio, TV.. and of course in UFO circles; all looking like paranoics!.

But there's another place where it all resounded; the Italian Parliament. We know of only one previous Parliamentary interrogation about UFO's and it was in 1950! . The interrogations (yes, because they were three) by Hon,

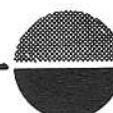
Falco Accame caused amazement and amusement. He was a Navy official, specialized in USA, former President of the Defense Commission of Parliament. As early as November 20th, he asked Prime Minister "if he has knowledge of the allarming situation of Marche and Abruzzo populations, due to manifestations of scientifically unexplainable phenomena reported by the press and watched by a Navy Ship; and moreover, what the Prime Minister wants to do to know the nature of the phenomena and pacify the people involved. On December 23rd, he asked the Minister of Defense to "make results of investigations about UFO's public, especially following several reports of these last weeks, with a lot of sightings and even photographs by individuals and groups". Hon. Accame told the Minister that the UFO problem has already come to political and scientific interest in other countries, while in Italy it's still considered science-fiction. He mentioned the U.S. Air Force studies and recalled that "also in Italy a ufological center exists, directed by an expert, Roberto Pinotti, but no adequate interest by government have met this center's activities" According to the socialist honorable, the UFO study may contribute to scientific knowledge in still unclear areas, like EM phenomena.

Our center has given Accame all needed help and material, as well as to another political party, the Radical one, which put forward a motion about UFO's in January. According to Hon. Mauro Mellini, "the government has to make public — all data collected about sightings of flying objects for which no origin or nature have been found, and has to make every effort to promote investigations". The radical motion took into consideration the UFO problem as both a scientific one and as a psychological and information one. "This is a problem of political responsibility on the part of the government."

February 7th, Hon. Accame has asked the Ministry of Defence if "in relation to the recent UFO debate at the British House of Lords and to that published by the "Washington Post" about detailed reports by USAF and US Ministry of Defence of sightings by naked eye and radar on part of military personnel attached to missile launching sites in Montana, Michigan and Maine, is the Ministry willing to promote a more deep investigation into the phenomenon, eventually in collaboration with other European countries, like France where phenomena are studied by the Toulouse center; moreover, to know if the Ministry of Defence has information on UFO's and, if so, is willing to make this known".

This final note closes what is certainly too short a report on what may be termed an exceptional year of UFO and ufological activities in Italy. No more comment can be made about these facts.

Spielberg's film release and following debate, Hynek's visit to Italy with TV interview, Ministry of Defence collaboration, flaps in September (Pegasus), November (Adriatic) and December (Southern) with thousands of witnesses, tens of photos, more than one hundred close encounters, scores of Police and Carabinieri sightings, no less than 25 humanoid entity reports, airport and radar sightings, the imprisonment of oldest Italian contactee, our magazine sold in news-stands, political involvement in Parliament; all this can't leave things unchanged. Anyway, at least for Italian ufological research, it's been a true milestone.



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The relationship between the UFO event and the Observer

GRAHAM F M KNEWSTUB

The relationship between the observer and the observed phenomenon is fundamental to experimental science. The observer usually knows what results to expect from the experiment and will tend to accept without question those results which confirm his predictions. It is the unpredicted and seemingly random results which should immediately alert the observer to a possible flaw in his original hypothesis or a defect in his experiment. However, human nature being what it is, there is a strong temptation to dismiss as random or irrelevant those observations which do not support the hypothesis.

This tendency is seen very clearly in the treatment of the data from the observation of flying objects where the emphasis is to identify them with known objects or physical effects, even at the expense of disregarding some of the data. This readiness to ignore inconvenient items of data applies as much to the UFO fanatics who see extra-terrestrial spaceships in clearly identifiable objects as to the scientific rigorists to whom the inexplicable is anathema. The effect of this intrusion of subjective considerations into the interpretation of observed data has been to produce a fog of futile and ill-founded controversy which has impeded UFO studies for more than thirty years.

The cardinal error is to disregard any item of observed data, for facts which do not support the hypothesis being tested indicate either faulty observational technique, or a faulty hypothesis, or the presence of some other phenomenon not covered by the original hypothesis.

In the case of UFO sighting reports there is a wide choice of hypothesis and a comprehensive scheme of analysis is required to classify the UFO event. In Figure 1, the scheme adopted by the British Flying Saucer Bureau is given, and from this it will be seen that the starting point is the observer's report. These reports are, of themselves, the basic facts; not the events which they purport to describe; and the study of these reports is as much concerned with the thought processes of the UFO-observers as with the originating UFO-events.

UFO reports may describe either objective events or subjective experiences. In the case of objective UFO events it is an unavoidable circumstance that, owing to their rarity and random occurrence, the great majority of reports originate from untrained, unprepared and ill equipped amateur observers. Consequently the true nature of the UFO event may not in fact correspond exactly with the UFO-observer's description; but rather, it may have to some extent be deduced from the description.

The UFO analyst therefore requires criteria to enable him to discriminate between the objective content of a sighting report and the products of subsequent 'processing' in the brain of the observer. The absence of such criteria makes it difficult to reconcile the small discrepancies which arise

in the accounts of a group of people who have jointly observed the same event. A reliable procedure to eliminate spurious detail is an essential step towards obtaining reliable UFO data.

There are many hypotheses which claim to explain the functioning of the human brain. The one which would seem to be particularly applicable to the 'data' processing function which is being considered is that which postulates that the brain and its associated nervous system behaves as an electro-chemical binary digital computer. This hypothesis has already led to the construction of electronic brain-function simulators which have proved helpful in the study of neuroses and other mental disorders.

The observer's report is the end product of certain well defined mental functions, such as data acquisition via the senses, data storage in the memory, data recognition by comparison with other memories, and data retrieval on which the report is based. A tentative diagram showing how these functions might be related is given in Figure 2. The possible interactions between these functions are such the conscious descriptions of a UFO-event may be degraded by spurious data derived from related information already stored in the observer's memory. Influencing factors could thus include.,

- (a) the interests of the observer, e.g. technology, religion, occult studies etc.
- (b) previous UFO sighting experiences.
- (c) religious/psychic/occult experiences.
- (d) choice of reading matter, cinema films, television viewing etc.
- (e) social activities such UFO sky watches, astronomy, occult societies etc.

Every UFO-observer contributes something to the general store of UFO knowledge, and in so far as this knowledge is absorbed by future observers it becomes an influencing factor in the descriptions of future sightings. The cumulative effect of this feedback and needs to be evaluated to provide the criteria which UFO analysts require.

From the foregoing it would appear that in order to interpret UFO sighting reports correctly it will be necessary to learn more about the way in which the brain processes and presents information of external events to the conscious mind. This study could well be undertaken by a small team using a purpose built electronic simulator to determine the criteria of objectivity required for UFO sighting analysis.

The next step would be to modify the simulator design to perform automatic analysis which would both speed up the treatment of UFO data and also eliminate the personal judgements of the analysts. Finally, when the automatic analyser requirements had been established the field investigation procedures and sighting questionnaires could be revised to conform with the automatic system.

Project UFODATA

PER ANDERSEN (SUFOI) DENMARK

1. Introduction.
2. What is the reason for using electronic data processing?.
3. The development of the Project UFODATA.
4. Project UFODATA as part of the total system of report collecting.
5. Project UFODATA - the coding of the reports.
6. Project UFODATA - the processing of the reports.
7. Results.
8. The future of the international co-operation.

I. INTRODUCTION.

The subject of the lecture is on the Project UFODATA - a project started by SUFOI. I shall explain the reasons for the setting up of a project for the data processing of reports, Project UFODATA's historic development, and the way that reports are usually processed by Scandinavian UFO Information. Further I shall discuss the application of the SPSS system - that is "the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" - a package of programmes which will be familiar to some of the participants of this conference.

Next I shall mention some of the results we have reached and the future prospects of the project. I shall conclude by making suggestions as how to set up an international group whose task it must be to establish a standard terminology and a set of definitions and classifications for the future co-ordination of the international processing of UFO and IFO reports. The setting up of an international group of this kind may already have been discussed by the Working Party. Nevertheless I shall allow myself to end this lecture by making some suggestions concerning this group.

But before I start I should like to point out that I have not worked out a set of definitions of the various ufological terms in this lecture. In the lecture I will make use of the usual terminology

which, unfortunately, is not always consistent. But please note that whenever I refer to "reports", I mean both reports of UFO's ("IFO" is an abbreviation of "Identified Flying Object").

2. What is the reason for using electronic data processing?

There are many ways of how to try to explain UFO phenomena. Among these I think that the qualitative and quantitative analyses must be carefully considered, and in the following the difference between these methods will be adumbrated (Figure I).

(a) Qualitative analyses.

Some of the UFO problems may be solved by thoroughly studying some selected reports that are considered significant, e.g. some reliable close encounters which can be studied in great detail. John G. Fuller's book on the Betty and Barney Hill case "The Interrupted Journey" is an example of such a qualitative analysis.

The advantage of the qualitative analysis is that it may deepen our knowledge of the puzzling nature of the UFO phenomena. On the other hand only really good reports can be used and qualified field investigators and interviewers are required, including experts within the fields of hypnosis, physics, sociology, psychology, etc.

(b) Quantitative analyses.

But a quantitative analysis may be applied where the ufologist works with a great amount of reports. The single report will only be significant in so far as it forms part of the basis material for the total analysis. We may prefer this method because there is no requirement of particularly good reports. A large section of the UFO and IFO reports can be used. In addition to this it is an advantage to be able to make a total analysis of the UFO phenomena to shed new light on general aspects.

Or it is possible to classify reports according to rules of similarity and diversification so that varying patterns of UFO behaviour might be uncovered.

This is where the electronic data processing offers many interesting possibilities as it is especially suited for the analyses of a great amount of data.

But there are also problems because a good and efficient system for the collection of reports is required; at the same

time the quantitative analyses can be costly, e.g. the electronic data processing.

But what are the advantages of using electronic data processing in connection with the quantitative analyses of UFO and IFO reports?. Well, as far as I can see, there are two substantial advantages.

First of all the reports are easily accessible. Within short time reports or categories of reports can be made available, e.g. suppose we would like to get hold of all the Danish reports describing two objects, the one green the other red. This might be interesting because UFO encounters of this type bear a likeness with observations of ordinary air-crafts. Until now it would have been rather time-consuming to find these reports as all reports should be read before the reports with these characteristics could be found.

Suppose instead that all Danish reports were computerized, e.g. on punch cards, the work would soon be finished. A copy of the reports in question could be produced in half or one hour!. Most of the time would be spent waiting for the information to be written on the line-printer. This transcribes of date, exact time, geographical position and other pieces of relevant information would be sufficient to find the original reports from the archive in a very short time.

Secondly: statistics could be easily worked out. The advantage is clearly seen when complex analyses must be carried out, e.g. cross-tabulations where the ufologist wants to find the answer to a question like, say, how many observations of a given colour correspond to observations of a given shape. So what is done is this, two parametres are crossed with the result that we will know how many reports can be found in every possible category.

If this should be done manually it would be extremely time-consuming. But the computer can do this job in a half or a full hour when the reports are computerized. The time necessary for operating the machine takes even less time.

All in all the electronic encoding of reports is time-saving, and statistics can easily be worked out. On the other hand it must be admitted that these operations are costly. It can be difficult for UFO organizations to find the economic resources to buy or lease the required computer-time etc.

However, it must be born in mind that the use of computers may also have some unforeseen implications, e.g. " misuse of

extensive files" or "GIGO" (i.e. "Garbage In, Garbage Out"). It is therefore very important that those in charge of the electronic data processing, programmers, and statisticians are conscientious and meticulous.

Another problem may be that an increasing number of UFO organizations suddenly realize the advantages and the necessity of computerizing reports so that one data bank after the other crops up all over the world. If we do not pay attention to this problem now, the processing of UFO and IFO reports will be quite chaotic on an international level as many ufologists will do the same kind of work, let alone the risk of different systems being applied for the electronic processing of reports. I shall return to this problem later.

But now I shall give an account of the development of Scandinavian UFO Information's Project UFODATA - that is the project for the electronic data processing of reports.

3. The Development of the Project UFODATA.

(Figure 2)

How in fact did the project start?. What is the idea behind it?. Well, the project came into existence rather recently - a few years ago. Within the first years it was soon established - and we have - as far as I can see - achieved satisfactory results.

In 1977 I became interested in the potentiality of electronic processing of reports and I wrote some papers on the prospects of the data processing of UFO and IFO reports. The first was called "The Storing and Input of Data" in which I discussed the expediency of coding and punching UFO reports. The second one was called "The Coding of UFO Reports" in which I described the parametres of that were to be encoded and punched. In this paper a code-book was adumbrated. The third and last one from 1977 described a test-system which briefly deals with the facilities necessary for the electronic processing of reports. This blue-print showed how it was possible to select certain reports and work out statistic analyses. The test-system consisted of an EDP programme for file-manipulations which I developed at the University of Arhus.

In July 1977 I made a lecture titled "UFO Reports and Data Processing" at a UFO seminar in Denmark. Then it was agreed to start the electronic data processing of reports and Project UFODATA was commenced in fact.

A few months later - in September 1977 Project UFODATA was officially started when I was elected member on the board of SUFOI as "a computer consultant".

The first job that had to be carried out by Project UFODATA was to clarify the thoughts and ideas concerning the code-book and - at the next stage - to complete it. The 60-pages book was made available in January 1978 and has since been revised as there has been a demand for new codes or the existing codes have needed to be stated more exactly. But the code-book was now ready and the encoding of the first reports could now be commenced.

In February 1978 the first results of Project UFODATA was at hand. On the basis of this I wrote "The Time Law". In this I dealt with analyses of the time of the day UFO's are observed.

Originally I had in mind to develop the above-mentioned test-system into a programme proper which could be used for the data processing of UFO and IFO reports. In the beginning of 1978 however, I studied the SPSS system, i.e. "The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences". This sociological/statistical electronic data processing system has found general use all over the world. It has been installed at the University of Aarhus, where I have access to it.

I soon realized the potential of this system because it contains the facilities to statistical analyses. In addition to this the existing encoding of UFO and IFO reports could fit in with the SPSS system without difficulty, so Project UFODATA did not hesitate to apply this comprehensive statistical system.

The coding of reports was continued and in the beginning I carried out the work of my own. But I soon realized that without assistance the result would be only a few reports in too long a time. Therefore I started to look for someone to help me with the work for Project UFODATA.

All Danish reports from 1976 were the first ones to be coded and punched on punched cards and in March 1979 they were all completed. By then about 500 UFO and IFO reports had been encoded and punched.

Today we have reached about 700 reports. Five operators now work for Project UFODATA, but more are being trained and the group may soon be extended to 10 persons.

4. Project UFODATA as part of the total system of report collecting.

(Figure 3)

The object of Scandinavian UFO Information - among other things - has been to collect and assess accounts of UFO encounters. Since its start in 1957 there has been a constant stream of Danish reports and today at least 6,000 are stored in our files. Compared to the size of Denmark the number is relatively high and this is most probably, due to a comprehensive and efficient system of collecting reports.

As Project UFODATA constitutes an important part of this we shall go into details of the procedure we follow when a UFO is reported. Figure 3 shows us this, though somewhat simplified. Even if this is largely the same as used by many UFO organizations I shall describe it briefly.

The whole thing starts with the UFO encounter in Denmark. One of several persons observe an unidentified phenomenon in the sky.

(1) Whether or not it has physical existence is of no interest to us in this context. In some way or another SUFOI gets into contact with the observer and a field investigator is contacted.

(2) In Denmark we have between 80 - 100 field investigators. There is a somewhat uneven geographical distribution, but we have to make up for this disparity by training new field investigators. At the moment attempts are made to start new courses to give them sufficient theoretical and practical background for the registering of reports.

If a field investigator thinks that the encounter must be seriously considered, and not a practical joke, he fills in one of our standard forms.

(3) For almost 20 years this standard form has undergone very few changes, but recently it has been replaced by a completely new one, which has been developed on the basis of 20 years experience with UFO encounters. The form has been worked out by Project UFODATA and the project has benefited from this. Partly because

we have been confronted with the practical side of collecting reports and partly because the new form is more suitable for our purpose: the encoding of data.

Besides filling in the report form the field investigator makes notes of his or her impression of the observer and all the circumstances as regards the encounter.

(4) It must be mentioned that we occasionally receive reports without the mediation of a field investigator (dotted line). But we naturally try to avoid this situation. Now the assessment group enters the picture and all available information (including the field investigator's personal comments) are thoroughly studied.

(5) The object of the assessment group is to find out whether the observed phenomenon might be a conventional phenomenon, e.g. an air-craft, a satellite, or a meteorite. This group comprises experts within the field of e.g. aviation and astronomy. If the group cannot find a natural explanation to the problem, it will be classified and filed as an UFO report. If it can be identified, it will be classified and filed as an IFO report. One of the reasons for including the IFO reports in our files is that doubtful reports can be cross-checked in the future.

UFO and IFO reports are then filed in our report file.

(6) Later they are then encoded by Project UFODATA.

(7) After the encoding the original reports are sent back to the manual report file. As a result of the encoding the punched cards arise, and these constitutes Project UFODATA's electronic report file.

(8) Please note that both UFO and IFO reports are entered. The data bank with the Danish reports can be used for various analyses and statistical studies because the ufologist can easily find data on Danish UFO and IFO reports without going through a time-consuming paperwork.

(9) All in all we will achieve better results and we can extend our knowledge of UFO phenomena.

(10) This is, in few words, the way from the Danish UFO encounter to the final analyses of UFO phenomena.

A rather important question in this connection is, of course, to what extent the original data from the observer agree with the data in the statistical analyses. Or in other words; is the final analyses an adequate representation of the actual facts? A good system for the collection of reports must ensure that as little information as possible is lost or distorted. The equation sign on Figure 3 illustrates this problem. It is, however, outside the theme of this lecture, so with these rather brief discussion of this matter I shall conclude the description of our system for collecting reports.

Now we shall go further into the problem of how the Danish UFO and IFO reports are registered and coded by Project UFODATA.

5. Project UFODATA - the coding of the reports.

As mentioned Project UFODATA undertakes to code and punch SUFOI's Danish UFO and IFO reports. Most UFO organizations that use electronic data processing omit the IFO reports, but Project UFODATA encodes these as well. Besides the expediency of making cross-checks of UFO and IFO reports, we gain an insight into how identifiable flying objects like aeroplanes, planets, meteors, are perceived. Figure 4 shows the way from the data of the reports through the coding-system.

The primary material is naturally the original Danish reports (1). The material includes news-paper clippings, reports from other UFO organizations in Denmark etc. The reports are then coded and put on data-sheets (2) which quite simply is a piece of paper with a line for each report and a column for every parameter that is coded. For this purpose the code-book is used.

The reports are later punched on punched cards on the basis of the data-sheets. The punching can be either manual on a keyboard punch or by input on a display unit and punched on a punching station. The punched reports constitutes our data bank (3).

But what data and what parameters do we code?. Well, the parameters we code can be seen on Figure 5.

Well, it is a problem when reports are coded that we have to establish what data we want to include in the coding and we are often in a dilemma because on the one hand we want as much information per report as possible,

on the other hand we want to code as many reports as possible. The inevitable outcome of this is, as a rule, that we have to leave out some parameters though we find them both desirable and applicable.

Another dilemma is whether we should aim at coding information about the observed object, or information about the observer and the circumstances at the encounter. In other words it is a question whether we want to put emphasis on a physical explanation of the UFO phenomena or on possible sociological or psychological explanations.

Even if none today can know for a certainty whether we shall find the answers to the UFO phenomena in the one direction or in the other, the tradition is, as we all know, to pay more attention to the physical nature of the objects. This is also the prevalent attitude among the ufologists behind Project UFODATA, and so far we have given priority to information about the physical data of the objects.

The parameters we apply can be divided into some main categories, as is apparent on Figure 5. They will be stated briefly in the following.

Identification: this is a number of eleven figures containing e.g. information about the year, the month, and the date of the encounter.

Place: the postal area of the site of the encounter.

Time: Information about how exact the time of the encounter is stated. The time of the encounter and its duration.

The Object: under this entry a great many parameters of the observed object are encoded. If several, widely differing objects are observed, a set of data for each group of identical objects are coded. The following details are registered; number of objects, colour of object, nature of light radiation, sound effects, the appearance and disappearance of the object - direction of compass, and height of angle, and possible alterations of direction, altitude, and speed.

Circumstances: a two-figured code about weather conditions during the encounter.

The Observer: his or her age, sex, employment are encoded and the number of witnesses, as well.

Reference: references are encoded, that is the year when the report was put down, what form or type of report (including a note if the report comes from another Danish UFO organization) and finally if the report has been referred to in our magazine "UFO-NYT" (UFO News) or in another UFO magazine.

Comments: special information about the encounter is mentioned here. Some details are considered rare, so that it is not necessary to make particular parameters to cover them. Such details are coded under this category. Under this entry the type of the encounter can be stated (e.g. "close encounter") and special characteristics e.g. observation of Ufonauts or EM effects (electro magnetic effects) of various kinds.

Strangeness: If the field investigator comes across certain peculiarities it will be dealt with under this category. Strangeness is coded by degree; the scale goes from 0 - 9, 0 indicates "missing" (unknown strangeness) whereas "1" means the lowest degree of strangeness and "9" the highest. There is no fixed scale to determine the degree of strangeness; it is up to field investigator's judgement to do so.

Reliability: The degree of reliability is an expression of how much the account of the encounter can be trusted. Did it in fact take place the way we were told it did?. All the full numbers from 0 - 9 are applied where "0" indicates "missing" (unknown reliability), "1" the lowest degree of reliability e.g. an unverified notice in a news-paper - and "9" the highest degree of reliability. Like the degree of strangeness, the degree of reliability is determined by the field investigator. There is no fixed scale. However, there are certain directives that must be observed when determining the degree of strangeness and the degree of reliability. These are the parameters that are used when any report is coded by Project UFODATA. The coding of UFO and IFO reports is basically the same.

6. Project UFODATA - the processing of the reports.

Project UFODATA uses the SPSS system for the processing of UFO and IFO reports. SPSS is an abbreviation of "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" and it is a system for electronic data processing

especially applicable for the departments of the social sciences at universities and similar institutions all over the world. The SPSS system was originally developed in the USA. But has also been put into use in many countries outside the USA, e.g. in Europe.

The system is very comprehensive and offers many possibilities for the processing of data. The main purpose of it - when given a certain amount of data on a certain format - to carry out social-statistic analyses of the given material. The analyses extend from rather simple analyses e.g. frequency tables, cross-tabulations with chi-square-tests or scattergrams to advanced statistical tests.

As the SPSS system contains all the facilities that are required by a project like Project UFODATA, it was natural that we stated to use this system.

On the picture you can see the comprehensive work that describes the SPSS system and how it is used. Let us see how the data processing of reports are carried out by the SPSS system - though we shall not go into technical details. Figure 6 shows us a survey of the processing of reports.

The processing of UFO and IFO reports is a two-staged operation. To begin with a so-called SPSS system file is made, and then later the actual analyses of the material is carried out, and results are printed out.

The data necessary for making a system file are made up by two types. First of all the system must be fed with the material that is going to be analysed. In this case we have the many UFO and IFO reports on punched cards (1). The reports must have a certain format in order to be processed by the SPSS system, e.g. it is a condition that the mass of data is so-called quadrangular - that is the material must be made up by a definite number of reports which again must be made up by a definite number of so-called parametres where each of them may be given certain values. A parametre can be the date or the number of objects and the parametres we use are mentioned above.

Along with the material to be processed the system requires many pieces of information about e.g. the constituent parametres. These exist as punched cards with which the system is fed (2). This is the other kind of data.

The SPSS system is then fed with these two types of data (3) and this results in the so-called SPSS system file (4).

The file contains the data or material that is to be analysed and information about its structure. However, it is possible to have various statistical analyses printed out while the system file is being made.

We now have a system-file that is permanently in the computer, and it is normally not necessary to input the punched cards once again. On the basis of this system file many analyses can be made.

If the ufologist wants to make some statistical analyses of the reports in the system-file, then he feeds the SPSS system with the system file along with information about the requested analyses. The information can be supplied in two ways. One way of doing this is to write it on the format requested by the SPSS system on e.g. punched cards. These data can be called job-information or job-cards (5). Together with the system file (4) the job-cards are fed into the SPSS system (7) and the analyses is made.

The other way of doing it, is to apply the job-generator I have developed. The job-generator is a program that asks questions about the requested analyses; the output of this programme supplies the above mentioned job-cards automatically (6). Together with the system file these job-cards are supplied in a like manner as before to the SPSS system (7).

The advantage of applying the job-generator is that we do not have to trouble with the format required by the SPSS system. Instead the job-generator just requires the operator to answer some very simple questions. The job-generator will automatically transcribe the information into the required SPSS format. As the job-generator can be operated by someone who is not familiar with the format of the SPSS system, it enables the ufologist without much computer experience to make analyses of reports. But it is an advantage even to those who are familiar with the SPSS system as the use of the job-generator will minimize the risk of making mistakes when the format is written. Consequently reruns can be avoided.

Whether, however, we decide to use the job-generator or to use the job-cards directly the output of the run (7) will be a set of statistical analyses (8). This can be simple tables of frequency or cross-tabulations etc. But other than statistical analyses can be made, e.g. it is possible to look for certain reports or groups of reports and it is an asset to the SPSS system that is practical in connection with the processing of UFO and IFO reports. So the SPSS system-file is not only the basis of the statistical analyses, but it is also an efficient electronic report-file - or data bank so to say - where the

reports can be found without difficulty when they are needed.

7. Results

Scandinavian UFO Information has achieved some satisfactory results since Project UFODATA started the electronic data processing of Danish reports. As mentioned before, we have about 700 UFO and IFO reports in our data bank. Even if it is rather small compared to other data banks in the world - e.g. UFOCAT in the USA - our data bank is good enough for making thorough analyses and studies of Danish reports.

"The Time Law" was the first book that was published as the result of Project UFODATA'S efforts. The book published in 1978 can be seen on this picture. It contains an analysis of the time-of-day distribution of Danish UFO encounters and it is an attempt to find the answer to three questions:

- 1) What is the time-of-day distribution of the Danish UFO encounters?
- 2) Is this in accordance with foreign analyses like the analyses undertaken by e.g. Jacques Vallee?
- 3) Can this time-of-day distribution be ascribed to the cause of natural factors?

There seems to be strong indication that the Danish data support international theories in this field and that certain characteristics cannot be explained as the result of so-called "natural factors". e.g. it is hard to find a natural explanation to the secondary maximum of frequency at 3.30 in the morning.

The analyses resulting from the electronic data processing of Danish reports have rendered material for a new book "The UFO observers - Who Are They?" which I am writing now. It will be about the UFO observers and I try to find an answer to the question: Can we say that there is a certain kind of people who experience UFO encounters?. I will not reveal more about the book, but I can inform you that I expect it to be published in the end of this year or the beginning of 1980.

Project UFODATA has achieved other results in the previous years within international co-operation. Around the world there are individuals or groups who work with electronic data processing of reports and it is only natural that these persons - who can be considered specialists - try to get in touch with one another. Project

UFODATA is in contact with some of these groups, e.g. in Sweden, Belgium, England, and USA.

The whole problem of international co-operation of the electronic data processing of UFO and IFO reports is a matter I shall return to in the concluding remarks.

But what is the future of Project UFO-DATA?. The answer to this problem can be summed up in five points:

- 1) We will extend the number of active operators in Project UFODATA in order to extend the capacity of the project as a whole.
- 2) Project UFODATA will continue to computerize Danish UFO and IFO reports in a growing number.
- 3) We will continue to study the theoretical side of the electronic data processing of reports.
- 4) We will publish books and papers on and about Project UFODATA and the results we have achieved.
- 5) We will further engage in the international co-operation of the EDP of reports. Project UFODATA will extend its contacts with UFO organizations and groups in other countries and participate in international groups, meetings and conferences.

8. The future of the international co-operation

Finally I shall discuss some of the problems in connection with international co-operation of the electronic data processing of reports. To be sure it is not quite the subject of my lecture. However, the data processing of reports seems to be one of the main items on the agenda of this international conference. Therefore I shall briefly touch the subject of international co-operation.

What is the international situation concerning the use of computers for the processing of reports? By and large there are three groups of persons who are interested in this subject:

- 1) There are those who work out computer files for local reports. This is what Project UFODATA does.
- 2) There are those who work out files for all accessible reports, e.g. the american data bank UFOCAT.

- 3) There are those who are interested in data processing of UFO and IFO reports, but who have not started the practical work yet.

I think it is necessary to focus on the activities of those in the second group who work with a computer file for all accessible reports.

For many years extensive central data banks have been considered the most profitable among computer experts. In many countries extensive data banks, containing information about the population, have been established. It is probably due to this general trend of establishing extensive data banks that ufologists have expressed the desirability of having data banks with information about most UFO encounters from all over the world.

As long as only a few ufologists have been occupied with the electronic data processing of reports, it has been reasonably enough to establish one big data bank with so many reports from the world as possible. But today things have changed. So many groups and individuals are working with computerizing reports that I consider the establishment of more international data banks to be unnecessary at the moment.

There are some big disadvantages of the work that is done at the big data banks. I shall mention a few of the negative sides.

First of all there are many ufologists who independently of one another attempt to work out data banks of UFO encounters from all over the world. However, this is not only a waste of time, as a group in Belgium might encode exactly the same reports as a group in the USA, but what is worse the consequence might be that the very same report can be encoded in different ways. One thing is that half the work done by these two independent groups is superfluous another thing is that the same report is encoded differently in the two data banks. The latter can be a minor catastrophe as it can be difficult to determine whether it is the same UFO encounter in question.

Another disadvantage is that some computerized information is not based on the original reports. I have e.g. heard that some of the reports in the American data bank UFOCAT come from UFO magazines. So the data bank contains information of UFO encounters that is not based on first hand accounts; consequently we cannot tell for sure whether some or many details have been lost or distorted. Neither the computer scientist nor the ufologist can be satisfied with this.

These are some of the disadvantages of the big international data banks containing information of UFO encounters from all over the world. It is, however, interesting to note that there now is a general tendency among computer experts

to avoid the big central data banks and they seem to be more and more in favour of decentralized computers with smaller data banks. The reason for this is e.g. that the big data banks are difficult to operate and hard to survey. I think it would be advisable to follow this trend as regards the data processing of reports.

I think it would be an advantage if UFO and IFO reports were encoded on smaller and decentralized computers instead of the bigger ones. A decentralized encoding should be carried out by various UFO organizations and groups around the world so that each is responsible for its own area. The encoding of reports could be co-ordinated through international co-operation and there could be a profitable exchange of ideas and data.

There is much to be said for the decentralized encoding in local data banks;

- 1) We can be sure that the decentralized encoding will be carried out by ufologists with local knowledge and experience. In this way it is possible to avoid the risk of distortion which might be the inevitable result if the reports are encoded in a centralized data bank by people without the necessary background.
- 2) The encoding will be based on the original reports and not on the basis of 2nd or 3rd hand information from UFO magazines. The advantage is quite evident.
- 3) We can be sure that there will be a more extensive geographical coverage. This means that the total number of different reports will be bigger. This is due to the fact that it will normally be difficult for the centralized data bank to manage the encoding of all reports within a certain area. The local organization or group will find it easier to overcome this problem.
- 4) The decentralized data bank gives better conditions for statistical research. It will be difficult for local ufologists to make statistical analyses of the reports at a big centralized data bank, but the decentralized data bank offers good opportunities for doing research within the local area, and it will be easy to acquire material from nearby data banks. Of course it will be difficult to get access to reports from distant countries, and it will be difficult to make analyses of the total material from all countries.

These are some of the advantages and disadvantages of centralized and decentralized

data banks containing UFO and IFO reports. My opinion is, though, that a comparison will show that we will benefit more from the decentralized encoding and the decentralized data-files.

But in order to be able to make a decentralized collection and coding of reports the following must be observed:

- 1) It is necessary that there are UFO organizations or groups in as many countries as possible so that local data banks can be set up. As far as I can see, this is possible.
- 2) It is necessary that the UFO organizations can establish a consistent terminology and a set of definitions and classifications. In other words "we must learn to speak the same language" !
- 3) It is necessary that we attempt to establish universal criteria and a system of encoding, so that it is possible to exchange data and make joint analyses.
- 4) It is necessary to ensure reasonable possibilities for the exchange of information, experience, and data about the work within this field.

All in all: it is desirable and necessary to extend international co-operation within the field of encoding and processing of UFO and IFO reports. I suggest that an international group for data-interested ufologists is set up. This is certainly one way of ensuring efficient international co-operation.

If a group of ufologists is set up there will be several ways in which it could function. One of the ways is what we could call a centralized solution. Such a solution can be seen adumbrated on Figure 7. The groups' main working area will be to collect and distribute material and information about the data processing of UFO and IFO reports. Further it will be responsible for passing on data from various report files of the associated organizations and groups. Every organization will be currently informed (through e.g. a kind of news-letter) by the central international group which will undertake international co-ordination. The names of some of the countries that might be interested in an international work of this kind are written on the diagram.

The advantage of this centralized structure is its efficiency and reliability—that is, if the central group is reliable. On the other hand it requires that a group can be set up and that it will undertake the responsibility of collecting and

distributing the material.

Figure 8 shows an alternative solution for the setting up of an international group of data interested ufologists. It is a decentralized structure where each organization communicate from one to the other through a circle. The advantage is that a central group is not needed. And this will no doubt be time-consuming. On the other hand there are some drawbacks: the system is rather vulnerable as every link in the chain may delay the circulation of material. Moreover it will take quite a long time before all the associated organizations and groups have received the material in circulation.

The centralized structure is preferable if it is feasible, that is.

Apart from undertaking contact between the interested UFO organizations, the group could arrange meetings, congresses, work-groups and seminars. These meetings and the current contact could continue the exchange of ideas and information that have taken place during this congress.

I hope that the thoughts of an international group will be seriously considered and discussed and that we shall see the setting up of a group for the international coding and data processing of UFO and IFO reports.



Per Andersen, SUFOI Research Director

**FIG. 1 A COMPARISON OF
QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE
ANALYSES OF UFO-PHENOMENA**

(A) QUALITATIVE

A selected number of reports
Reports of a high degree of reliability
Reports of a high degree of strangeness
Many personal interviews
Extensive field investigation
The possibility of solution to specific
problems of UFO phenomena

AND/OR

(B) QUANTITATIVE

A large amount of reports
A comprehensive system for collection
of reports
Electronic data processing
Analyses of general aspects
The possibility of classifying reports
according to rules of similarity
and diversification

FIG. 2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF
PROJECT UFODATA

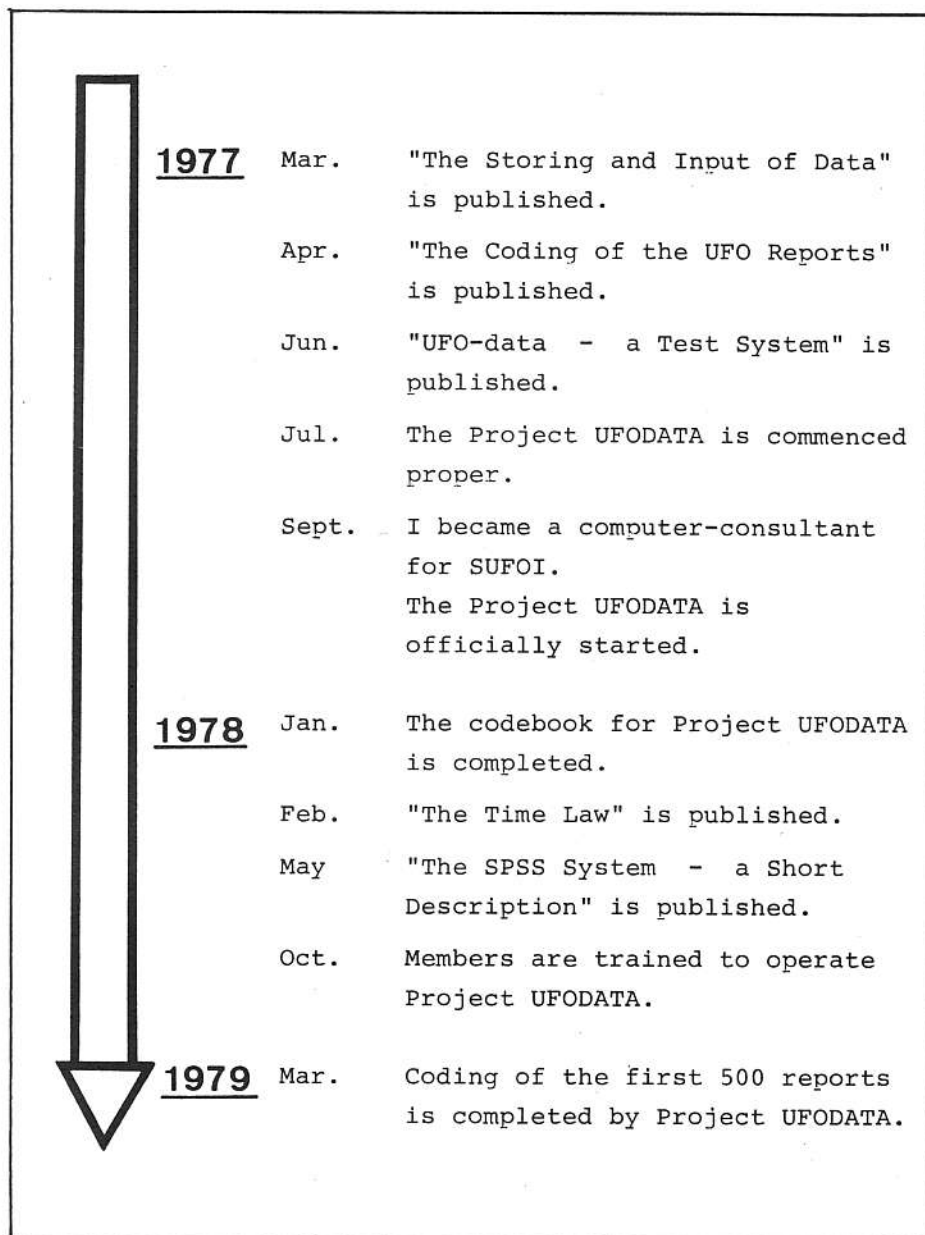


FIG. 3 SUFOI'S SYSTEM OF
REPORT COLLECTING

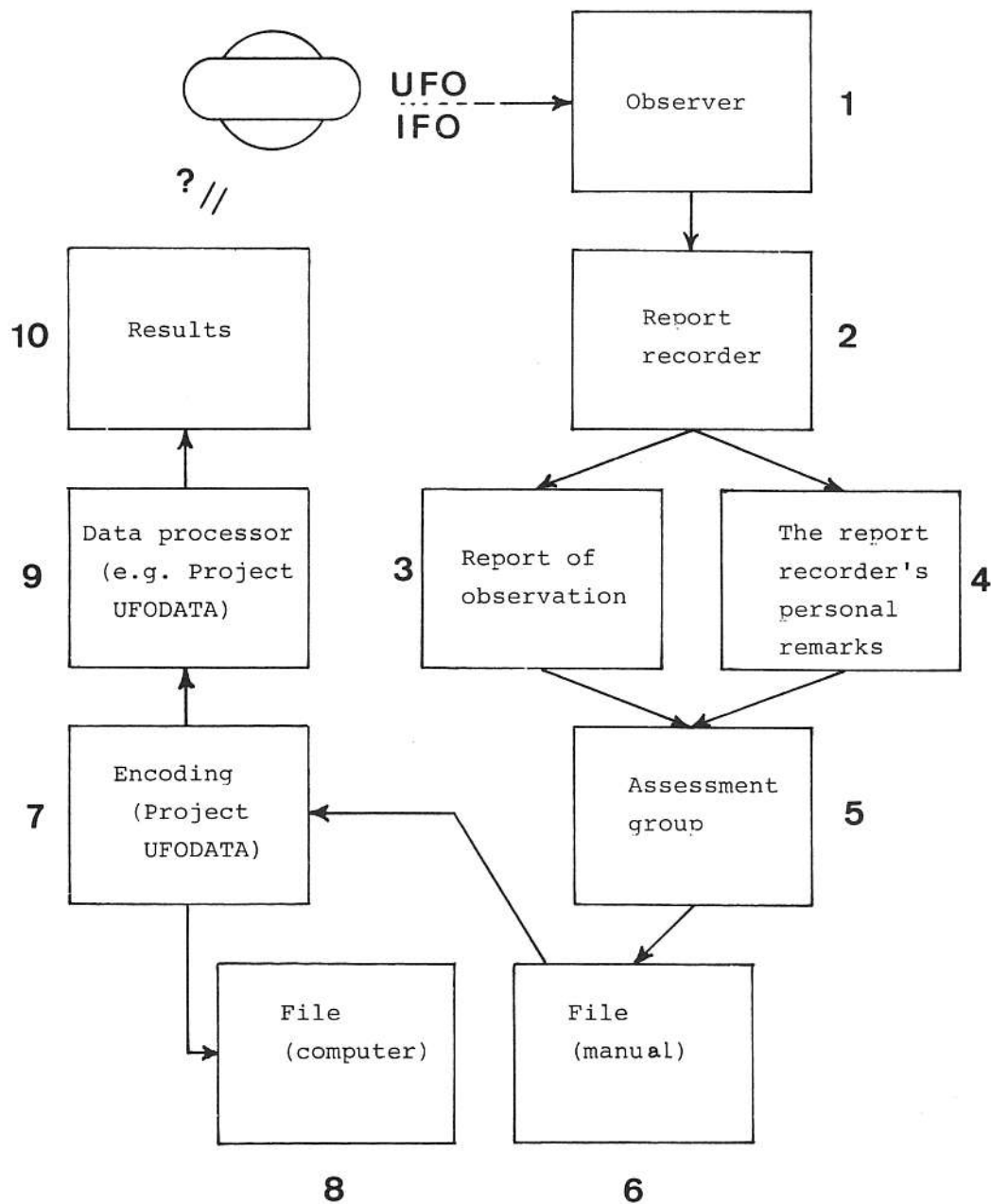


FIG. 4 REPORT - CODING I

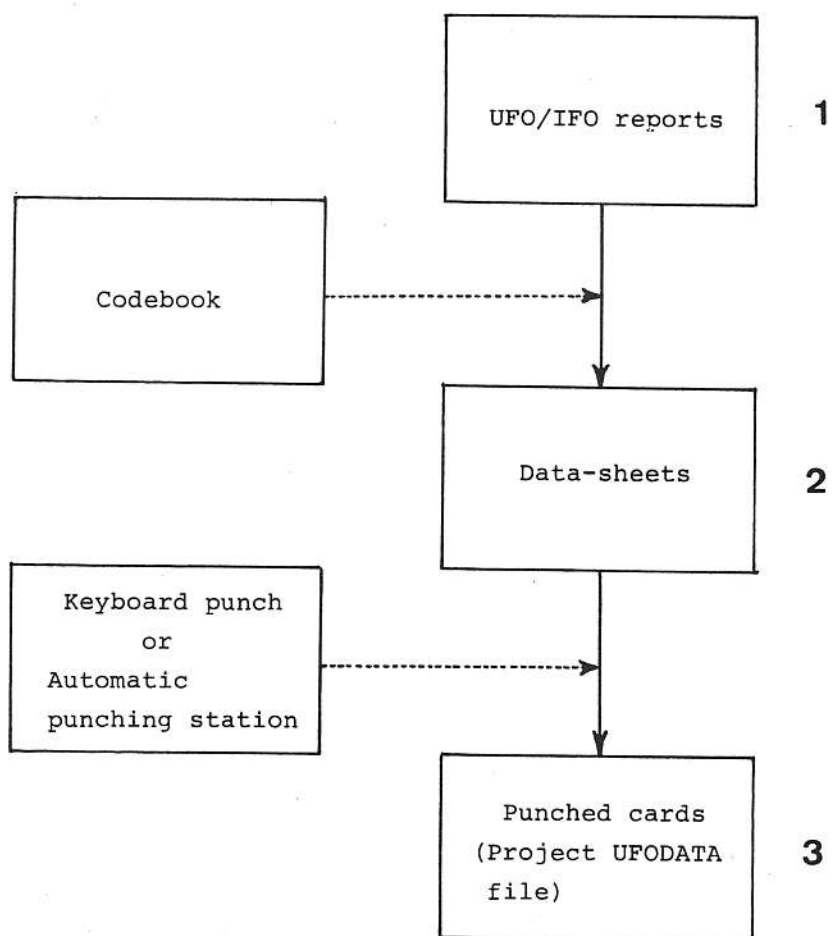


FIG. 5 REPORT-CODING II

<u>IDENTIFICATION</u>	Number (incl. year, month, date)
<u>PLACE</u>	Postal area
<u>TIME</u>	Time of the encounter (local time) Duration
<u>THE OBJECT</u>	Number of objects Shape of the object Nature of light radiation Sound effects Appearance - direction of compass, height of angle Disappearance - direction of compass, height of angle Alterations of direction, altitude and speed
<u>SURROUNDINGS</u>	Weather conditions
<u>THE OBSERVER</u>	Age and sex Education or employment Number of witnesses
<u>REFERENCE</u>	Year of registration Form and type of report Reference to e.g. magazine
<u>REMARKS</u>	Type of observation Special effects etc.
<u>STRANGENESS</u>	Degree of strangeness
<u>RELIABILITY</u>	Degree of reliability

FIG. 6 REPORT - PROCESSING

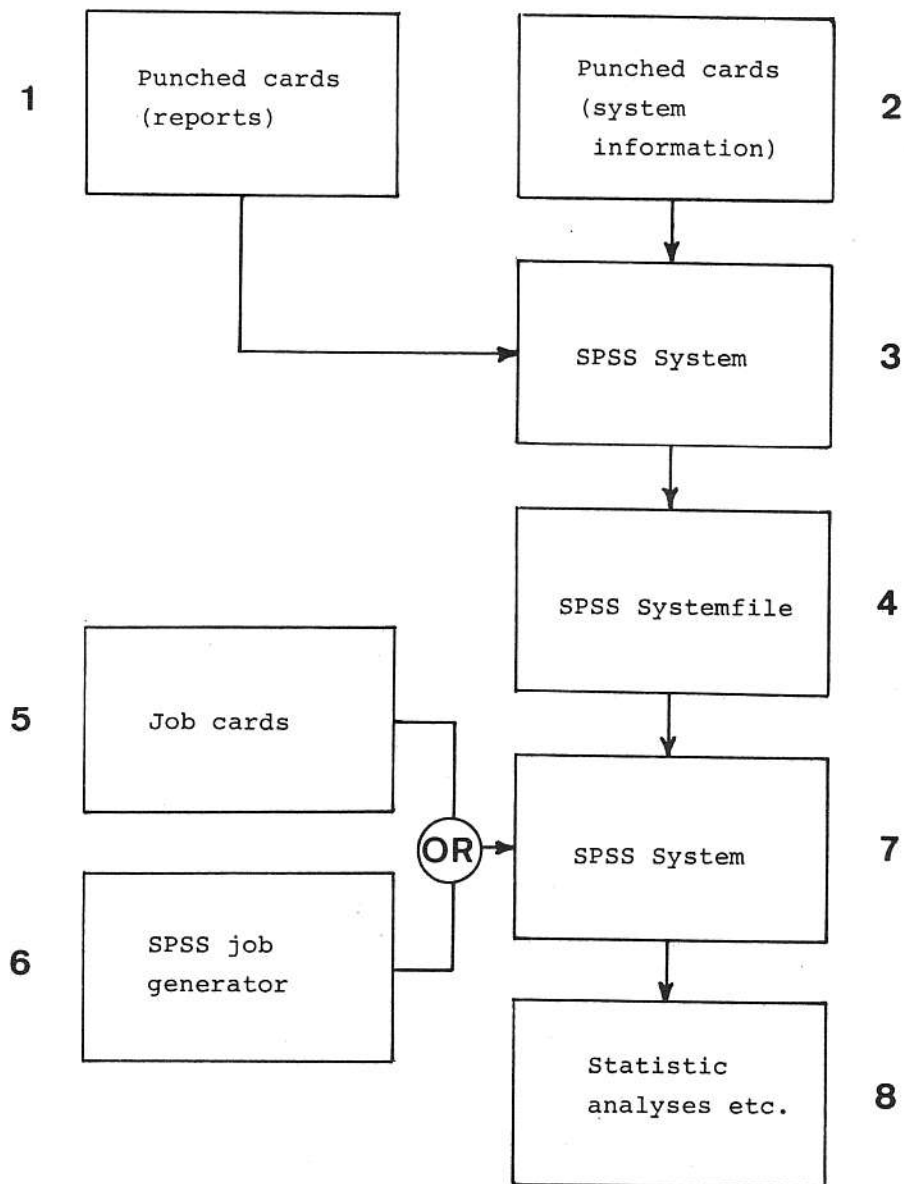


FIG. 7 INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATION I

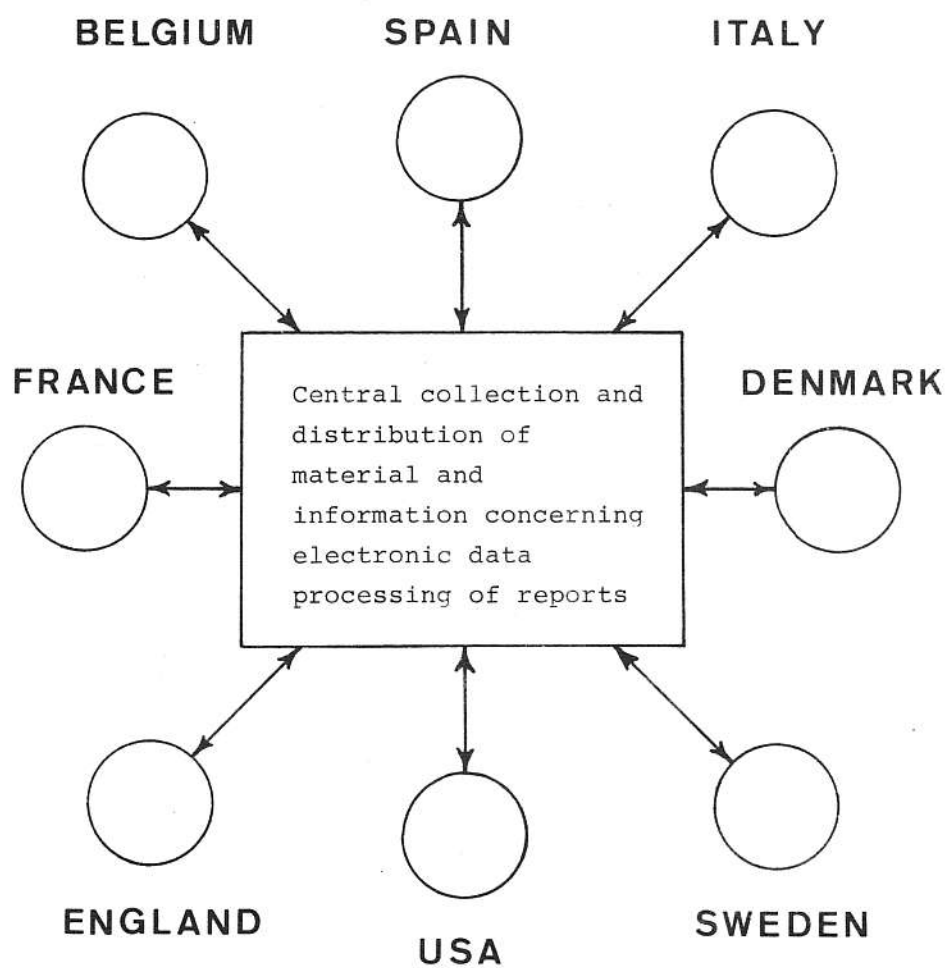
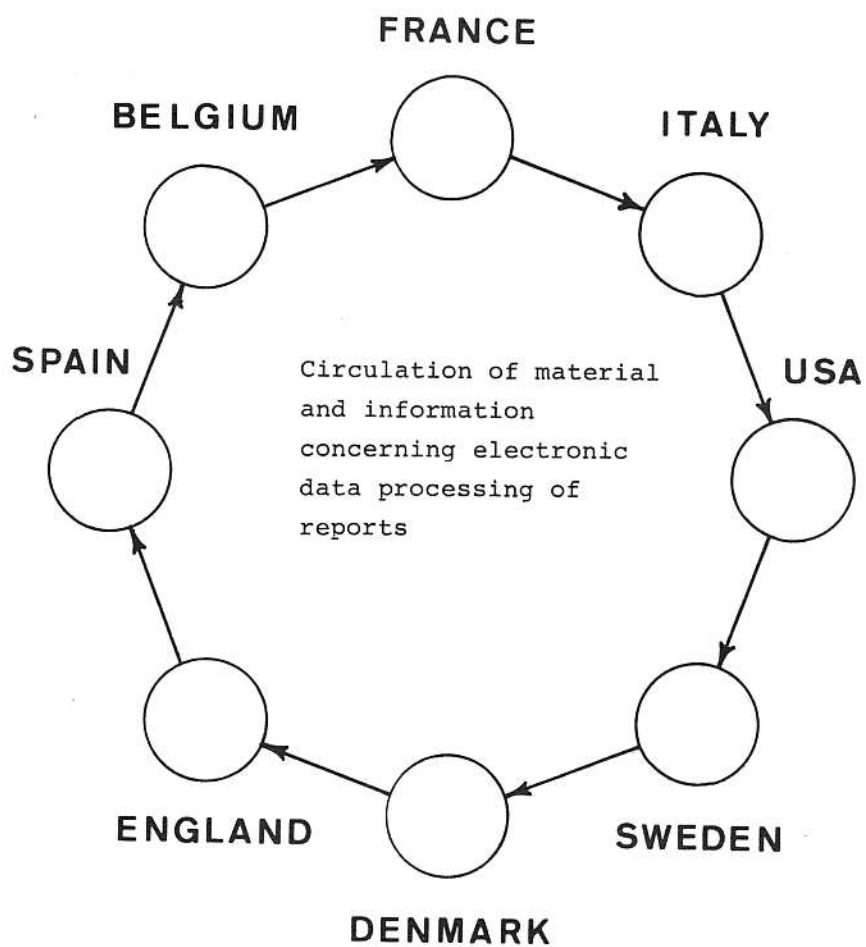


FIG. 8 INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATION II



From Data to Information

PETER A HILL

1. INTRODUCTION

For over thirty years, individuals and groups have investigated the varied phenomena grouped under the succinct, but inappropriate, generic term of 'Unidentified Flying Object' or 'UFO'.

The term is inappropriate as the word 'object' implies an objective, material measurable artifact or natural phenomenon. This is an unproven assumption in a field of inquiry which has been far too much afflicted by prejudice and by speculation without supporting evidence.

Curiously, the term 'UFO' appears to have been coined by the U.S. Air Force, despite the general impression that it was anxious to discourage any such assumption.

A very large quantity of data has been collected from all over the world and from the cosmos. Some of it is dubious, some reliable with supporting evidence and some would be incredible but for the impeccable reliability of more than one witness, supported by radar both from ground and airborne sources.

Potentially, the subject is a rich and rewarding one for research, physical, psychological and parapsychological.

2. DATA

What have we done with the data available to us? Much of it is catalogued by governmental or voluntary bodies, national or local; some is published; some has been investigated with variable thoroughness.

Further than that, with a number of notable exceptions, research is sporadic and lacks co-ordination. In some cases, the scientific approach would appear to have been abandoned in favour of speculation and prejudice.

Dr Zigel speaks with wisdom, in saying "It is safe to claim that the UFO problem has assumed a global character and therefore calls for a global research. International scientific co-operation in the solution of this problem would long have become a reality, had not sensationalism and irresponsible...assertions...interfered with it".

Certain names are well-known for excellent analysis of data. I come not to bury Hynek but to praise him.

Such work has also been carried out by Andersen, Delair, Poher, Vallee, and a number of others. We are proud to have several such workers with us this weekend. However, the ability to count such names emphasises their scarcity.

The inescapable fact is that new knowledge acquired on the nature of the stimulus of UFO reports is minimal. How do we explain this and, more important, how do we correct it?

My thesis is that the failure of UFO research to make substantial progress is a direct result of our failure to convert data to information.

3. INFORMATION

Some of you may be asking yourselves: 'What is the difference between data and information?'

Data, being the plural of datum, 'facts from which inferences are drawn' Information is knowledge acquired from analysis of the data.

An example will help to make this distinction clearer. Let us take a census of the population of a nation. In this country, each household contributes a common set of data. These are of no interest or use individually. However, following statistical analysis, we have information from which new knowledge is acquired. We may learn, for example, that the number of households owning more than one car has increased by a specific proportion over a decade. Such information is used for all manner of purposes, such as where new schools or roads will be needed.

I submit that there is a marked tendency amongst us to fascination with the data to the detriment of information. This is understandable as some of the cases which we deal with are of very substantial interest as individual episodes. It is akin to what industrial psychologists call task fascination, where a person becomes so interested in the detail of a working procedure that it becomes more important to the individual than the end product. The hazard of task fascination in UFO research is probably as great, if not greater than in any other occupation.

This tendency, albeit human, is to the detriment of evaluation, classification, analysis and deduction. We should bear in mind that 'science is measurement' and heed Galileo's dictum:.

'Count what is countable,
measure what is measurable
and what is not measurable,
make measurable'.

My deduction is that progress will not be improved until we undertake more thorough

statistical analysis. Such analysis will indicate patterns in the data and, where patterns are identified, hypotheses may be put forward to explain and interpret them.

I make no claim to anything original in what I am saying to you. Much of it has been said before. The justification for saying it again to this Congress is that action has not been taken on such advice especially in regard to international standards. We have an unprecedented opportunity this weekend to make a serious start on acting on these principles.

For this reason, you will find that about 20 delegates, including leading representatives from overseas, will be absent from some of the sessions. No disrespect is intended to those involved in such sessions. We will be working in a specially convened Working Party, in another room, endeavouring to thrash out some of these problems. The preliminary results of what I expect to be a continuing international link are to be reported to Congress tomorrow, at 17.30.

I am sure you will appreciate that such detailed work cannot be done in a gathering of the present size. There are many others who would have been equally suitable and the task of selection was not easy. I can only apologize to those not invited and trust that they will understand our problem. Having said that, the ideas and proposals of every person here will be welcome. You may contribute by speaking to me, or to other members, personally and by contributing to the discussion following the report back. I give you my assurance that every contribution received will be carefully considered. For this reason, the initial conclusions may well be tentative only and this is one of the reasons that a continuing global link is essential.

You will find a summary of the objectives of the Working Party displayed in the Exhibition Area to assist you. In addition, I commend the Journal of Transient Aerial Phenomena, available here as providing background to the Working Party's remit.

4. HYPOTHESES

Following the recognition of patterns, and correlations, in the analysed data, it will be necessary to put forward one, or more, hypotheses which may explain such patterns. I am not referring now to any total solution to the UFO enigma. It is more likely that such a conclusion will be reached either via a number of smaller findings gradually adding pieces to the jigsaw puzzle or that there may be more than one totally discrete phenomenon mixed together under the UFO label. For example, a useful side effect of our research has been that some light has been thrown on the ball lightning syndrome.

Testing hypotheses will not be an easy task as we lack two attributes which assist this. These are (a) a UFO in a laboratory and (b) a ready means of performing repeatable experiments. Few worthwhile things are easy, however, and I am confident that this problem will be overcome when we have unscrambled the data. Neither building a pyramid nor placing man on the moon was easy. I am anxious to emphasize a point of considerable potential significance, in connection with the search for patterns and which affects the way in which we maintain our data banks.

This is that it is important to maintain equally good records for the majority of explained reports as for the minority, the unexplained. The reason that I strongly advocate doing so is to enable comparisons to be made between these two groups. If, for example, it were found that the unexplained differed in some variable from the explained, this could be an invaluable clue to be examined in further detail. The work done by Hynek and Kuettnner on the relationship of credibility to strangeness illustrates the value of this concept. No report should be consigned to the rubbish tip but, however well explained, should be included in the data bank with the clear indication that it is an explained report. This is another reason that Hynek's concept that we are not studying UFO's but UFO reports is correct and highly relevant.

On the matter of correlations, I would like to draw your attention to the work of Delair on comparison of the periodicity of UFO reports and of sunspot activity. Although not yet definitive, this appears to be worth further investigation.

Eddy advocates study of a possible correlation between slowing sunspot rotation, increasing solar activity and a warming terrestrial climate. It would be worth including UFO periodicity in this study and I hope that this will be considered by those best qualified to do so.

5. SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The points which I have made are really no more than advocating the use of scientific method in our field of study. This does not mean that every-one of us need be a qualified scientist, provided we appreciate when we require professional advice and who is qualified to give it.

Reduction of this to its essentials could be summarised as:

- (a) objective recording of data, avoiding bias;
- (b) analysis of the data, including evaluation of reporter reliability;
- (c) searching for patterns amongst the analysed data and comparing various

- parameters with other time-variable events to seek correlations;
- (d) putting forward hypotheses which may potentially explain such patterns;
 - (e) testing hypotheses for validity in an endeavour to add new knowledge to what we now know.

I mention these points only because there is a tendency among some workers to lack patience with scientific method and to seek shortcuts. There are no short-cuts. Taylor said 'when studying the paranormal, don't throw away your lab coat'.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is my view that we should meet in the present way on a regular basis. Next time that we do so, I hope that less time will need to be devoted to the basic principles and that we shall be able to listen to papers derived from a common global data base, on the sound foundations of standard classifications and definitions. In short, go forth and make our work into a scientific discipline.

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